



(U) How I Spent MY Summer Vacation!

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(U) A summer hire finds exciting work at NSA...

(U//FOUO) This summer, after one year at Wellesley College, I was given the opportunity to join the Overhead Collection Management Center (OCMC) for three months as a summer hire. While my friends were going to be working as interns doing administrative work for congressmen, serving as waitresses at the local bars, or babysitting their next-door neighbors, I was going to learn about plotting the paths of billion-dollar satellites! I was very excited to be part of this critically important job that is essential to the security of our nation.

(U) I started in early June with a four-day orientation. It sounded a little excessive to me, but made the job seem even more important than I had already painted it in my mind. I was immediately attacked (and admittedly overwhelmed) with countless acronyms that seemed to be completely natural to all others in the class since many of the newcomers were moving from other positions within the Intelligence Community (IC). Thankfully, one of these "old-timers" took me under his wing and answered my constant questions, explaining everything I didn't understand.

(U//FOUO) When I completed my orientation, the orbit analysts welcomed me with open arms. I was taught how to use the different analytic tools, shown other non-orbit work that was taking place in the OCMC, and invited along to working groups and IC meetings. While all of these activities contributed greatly to my education of Overhead Collection, my professional growth was helped most by the knowledge of the personnel that participated in the working group.

(U//FOUO) The first group I observed was composed of about a dozen men who seemed to be a very professional bunch, yet all good friends with each other. They seemed very skilled and would debate the issues on the table, but did so in an affable manner that kept the discussion very open. Since most of what they said was way over my head, one of my coworkers would lean over and explain something to me every so often. When I returned to that same working group about a month later, I understood almost everything they were discussing! It was so neat to see how much I'd learned in such a short amount of time. I even got to brief senior leaders on the findings of my projects!

(U) The highlights of my summer (apart from the main highlight of actually having my job) include my TDY trip to a field site in mid-August, the government credit card for which I signed up, the multiple classes I've taken to be better trained in Overhead, and the great wealth of skills I've learned while working in the OCMC. I arrived at NSA knowing nothing about satellites, much less about NSA's mission and now have a clear understanding of Overhead vehicles and their missions. Just as important, I was fortunate enough to be in such an awesome work environment with great co-workers, supporters, and trainers. I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my work this summer and now have this job at NSA as my first career goal!

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